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AN INSIGHT REPORT FROM PROMETIS PARTNERS

The Owner's Guide to Building a Leadership Team

Five Moves That Turn a Group of Good Managers Into a Team That Runs Without You

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82% OF THE TIME, COMPANIES PUT THE WRONG PERSON IN A MANAGEMENT ROLE (GALLUP)

Most owners don't have a leadership team. They have a group of good managers who all report to them.

It usually happens the same way. The business grows, the owner promotes the best estimator, the most reliable foreman, the longest-tenured office manager, and gives them a title. Each one runs their area well. But every cross-department decision, every conflict, and every hard call still lands on the owner's desk.

That isn't a leadership team. It's a hub and spokes, with the owner as the hub. And a business built that way can only grow as fast as one person can decide.

WHAT THE HUB-AND-SPOKES MODEL COSTS

Growth
When every decision routes through the owner, the owner's calendar becomes the company's ceiling. Good people stop bringing ideas because they know the answer will be "let me think about it."

People
Managers account for at least 70% of the variance in team engagement (Gallup). Put the wrong person in the seat, or the right person with no support, and it shows up everywhere below them.

Promotions
Roughly 60% of new managers underperform in their first two years, most often because they were promoted for technical skill and never taught to lead (CEB, now Gartner).

Value
A buyer, a partner, or the next generation will look hard at one question: does this business work without the owner? If the answer is no, they'll price it in.

Five Moves That Build a Real Leadership Team

None of these require a reorg or a consultant on day one. They do require the owner to go first.

01

Pick Seats Before People

Start with the roles the business needs in the next three years, not the people you have today. Then ask honestly whether each person fits the seat. Loyalty, tenure, and family ties are real, but they are not qualifications.

> **START THIS WEEK** *Draw the leadership chart you would need to double revenue. Leave the names off.*

02

Put Every Seat in Writing

Each leader should be able to state, in a sentence, what outcomes they own, which decisions are theirs to make, and which two or three numbers prove they're winning. If they can't, they're guessing, and so are you.

> **START THIS WEEK** *Have each leader write their role in five bullets. Compare it to yours.*

03

Hand Over Decisions, Not Just Tasks

Delegating tasks keeps you in charge of everything. Delegating decisions builds leaders. When a leader brings you a problem, ask "What would you do?" before you answer, and let them own the outcome, including the misses.

> **START THIS WEEK** *Name one recurring decision you make today and hand it to someone permanently.*

04

Meet as a Team, Not as a Room of Departments

A leadership meeting is not a round of department updates. It's where the team works company-level issues together, against a shared scorecard, on a steady rhythm: weekly to execute, quarterly to plan.

> **START THIS WEEK** *Replace one status-update meeting with a single question: what is the biggest issue facing the company this week?*

05

Develop the People in the Seats

Most owner-led businesses promote people and then leave them alone. Leadership is a skill. It gets built with feedback, coaching, and real reps, or it doesn't get built at all.

> **START THIS WEEK** *Schedule a one-on-one with each leader focused on their growth, not their department's numbers.*

Is It a Team or a Group of Managers?

- [ ] Do your leaders solve cross-department problems without you in the room?
- [ ] Could each leader name the same top three company priorities?
- [ ] Does every leader have a scorecard they review without being asked?
- [ ] Have you handed off a major decision in the last 90 days, and left it handed off?
- [ ] If you stepped away for 30 days, would the business keep moving?

If you answered no to two or more, you're not alone. Knowing the five moves is the easy part. Knowing which one to make first, with the people you have and the business you run, is where most owners get stuck, and where an outside perspective pays for itself.

Find Out Where Your Leadership Team Stands

Leadership is one of six dimensions scored in the Transition360 Risk Profile. It takes just a few minutes, it's completely free, and it shows you where your business is strong and where it still depends too heavily on you. Already completed yours? Let's talk through what your results mean for your team.

Complete Your Transition360 Risk Profile →

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Prometis Partners helps privately held business owners build stronger, more valuable companies: growing what works, reducing how much the business depends on the owner day to day, and preparing to transition on their own terms, whenever that time comes.

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